

forced, there is no harassment or hazing. And the lieutenants are encouraged to attend Airborne and Ranger Schools after they complete IOBC.

IOBC is one of the most challenging courses the Army has to offer. The young infantry soldier can be sure that

today's infantry lieutenant knows his job as a platoon leader. The infantry sergeant, and especially the platoon sergeant, can be sure that they will receive from Fort Benning tactically and technically proficient, physically fit, and hard-charging platoon leaders.

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Offensive Reconnaissance Planning

LIEUTENANT COLONEL HOWARD W. CRAWFORD, JR.

A major problem for many units training at the Joint Readiness Training Center (JRTC) is their weak reconnaissance planning for offensive operations. Fortunately, no special program is needed to improve reconnaissance planning. In fact, a unit only needs to do two things: Use the military decision-making and intelligence preparation of the battlefield (IPB) processes more efficiently, and get its entire staff and all the commanders involved in building a plan. The key, then, is to have a plan before the reconnaissance effort begins. Too often, though, a unit has no such plan.

Successful units at the JRTC, whether they have the time for either deliberate or compressed planning, carefully follow good troop leading procedures when they begin developing plans. Shortcuts rarely work. The key element in any plan is getting the commander's initial planning guidance.

A commander should provide his initial planning guidance for the reconnaissance plan just as he does for the ground tactical plan. Far too often, commanders do not do this, perhaps because they do not view reconnaissance planning as a formal step in the overall planning process. In his initial guid-

ance, therefore, a commander should state his priority intelligence requirements (PIRs). (When he doesn't, his staff must develop recommended PIRs. A good S-2, on the basis of his own preliminary analysis, will normally recommend PIRs for the commander to consider.)

A PIR must address the immediate battle area (or the area of operation) and the area of interest. This analysis should also include the opposing force's air avenues of approach.

TIME LINE

At this point, using a backward planning sequence, the battalion executive officer and S-3 should establish time milestones. A good technique is to produce a time line that reaches all of the elements right after the warning order, but the times must be enforced. The one-third, two-thirds rule is still an important guide.

In preparing for an offensive operation, and before proceeding with the staff estimate process, the staff needs to consider the offensive IPB in more detail. When the Army first developed the IPB concept, the emphasis was on

defensive operations in support of heavy forces. Later, the focus shifted to include the deployment of strategic contingency forces, and the offensive IPB gained importance. Unfortunately, many of our best doctrinal discussions on the IPB still focus on defensive operations.

In an offensive IPB, the focus is first on those uncertainties concerning possible enemy actions—his withdrawal routes, defenses, disposition of obstacles, counterattack routes, reinforcing options—and then on our own routes forward. The key in an offensive IPB is not to focus on more than can reasonably be achieved at battalion level.

As the entire staff works with the S-2 on input to the IPB, they generate courses of action to support both the ground tactical plan and the reconnaissance plan. This is the critical step; they cannot afford to send out reconnaissance elements too quickly without a proper staff analysis.

Experience at the JRTC has shown that if scouts are sent out without a plan and coordinated support, they rarely contribute to the battle. It is essential that potential named areas of interest (NAIs), targeted areas of interest (TAIs), and decision points be developed to

support the intelligence collection effort. These will later serve the battalion as the primary focal points for its reconnaissance plan and will either confirm or deny the options in the ground tactical plan.

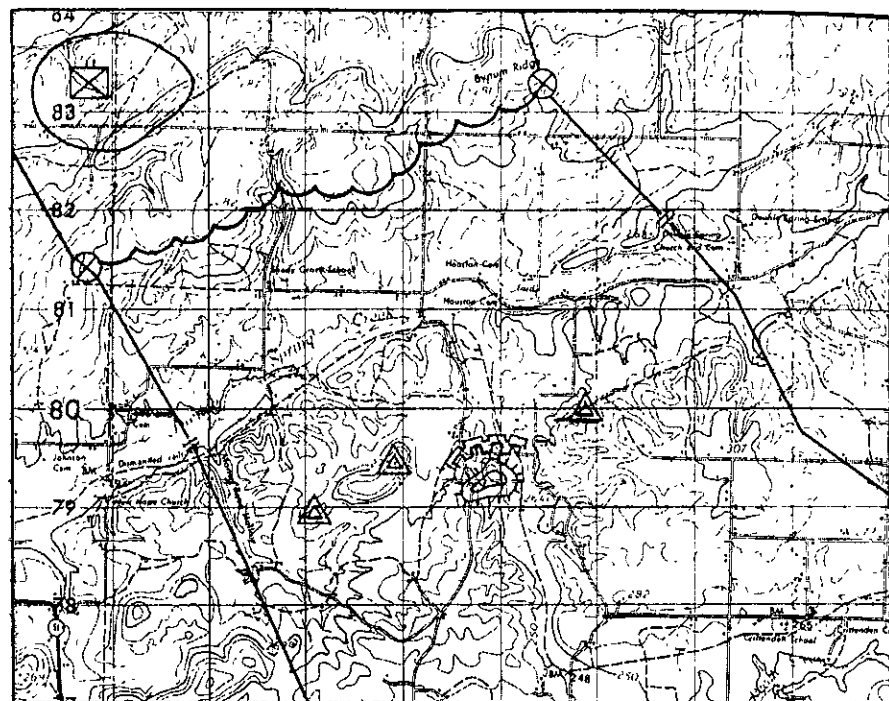
Time is also a factor when working on the reconnaissance plan. Most battalions will have somewhere between thirty minutes and four hours in which to complete their reconnaissance plans. Reconnaissance should not be limited to the scouts, because there are often more tasks than they alone can handle. A METT-T analysis will determine how many assets must be committed to the reconnaissance task. This does not mean that more is better, though. The commander should stay flexible and send only what is needed.

TEMPLATES

In the IPB process, the S-2 will normally work from a doctrinal template to formulate a situational template. This is much harder to produce in low intensity combat or when the threat is a Soviet surrogate force using a wide variety of equipment and tactics. When in doubt, the S-2 should apply common sense and develop a template using known threat equipment and adapting typical threat defensive doctrine. He must not underestimate the enemy. For example, patrols, observation posts, and ambushes are tactical concepts that all armies use.

He should then consider the air threat with likely directions of attack and, if friendly air is planned, the ADA threat as well. (The SA7B Grail, for example, is a formidable manportable weapon that can quickly disrupt an air assault.) The reconnaissance plan should therefore address probable enemy ADA locations for inclusion in the unit's future effort to suppress enemy air defenses. This is particularly helpful if an air assault is going to be used to support the ground tactical plan or if the S-2 intends to use pick-up zones near the objective to extract casualties.

Once the S-2 has completed his battlefield analysis, he is ready to develop a collection plan. Working with the S-3



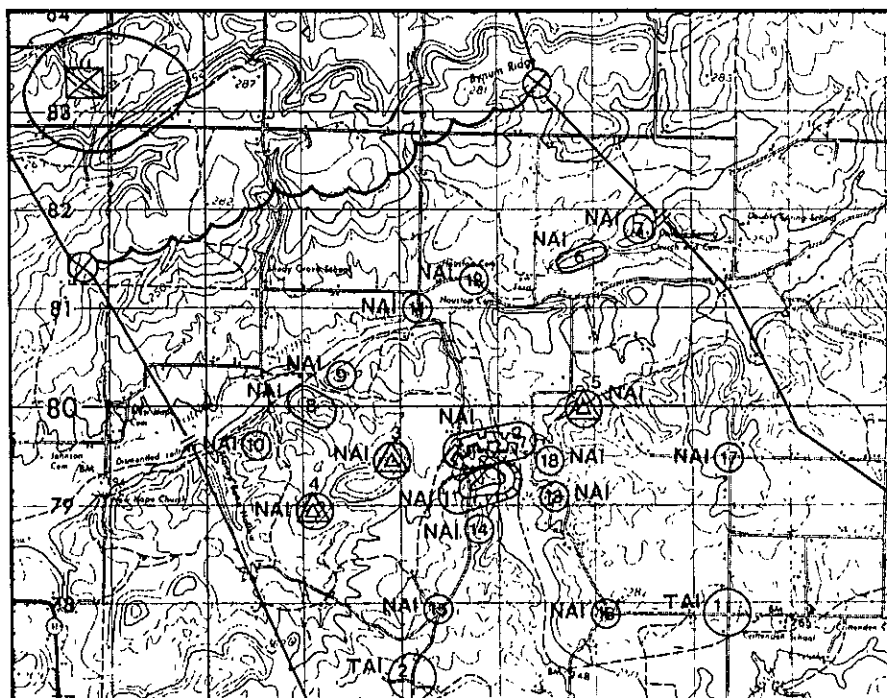
Map 1

and other key staff members, he can recommend assets and support for the reconnaissance effort and complete a tentative plan. Once the commander approves the plan, the S-3 issues the necessary orders.

The time and place for issuing orders can vary. Some or all of the scouting elements may already be on another mission, and whether the S-2 recalls these forces or just their leaders, or tries

to issue fragmentary orders over a radio, has to be considered.

Recalling the force has several advantages. First, the reconnaissance element receives a detailed plan, and the soldiers are more likely to ask questions to clarify the commander's intent. Second, the leaders can review photographs and other available intelligence products. Third, all units involved in the reconnaissance effort can coordinate and re-



Map 2

hearse their plans. And the reconnaissance force can rest, resupply itself, and get rid of overlays, target lists, and CEOs (communications-electronics operation instructions).

Since some tactical situations may not allow the scouts or other elements to withdraw for new orders, the next best option is to brief the scout leaders face to face. Too often, when fragmentary orders (FRAGOs) over a radio are used to issue the reconnaissance plan, the scouts do not have enough planning time.

A brief example from the JRTC will help illustrate one way to translate the IPB effort and staff estimate into a reconnaissance plan. In Map 1, the Blue Force unit, in an assembly area, has the mission to conduct a forward passage of lines and a deliberate attack to seize a vital crossroads held by an opposing force company in a strongpoint position. The commander's intent is to destroy the enemy in and around the strongpoint, and to open the crossroads so that friendly forces can pass along the route. The commander's PIR focuses on four key points:

- Confirm and describe in detail the OPFOR positions controlling the crossroads.

- Find all enemy locations that support the OPFOR strongpoint.

- Determine the best routes into the objective.

- Determine the most likely routes for enemy reinforcement.

Given this mission and the commander's PIR, the S-2, with input from the entire staff and the subordinate commanders, develops his detailed IPB.

In Map 2, the S-2 has translated the commander's PIR and additional intelligence requirements into 18 NAIs and two TAIs. There are no guidelines for the number of NAIs or TAIs, but they should directly relate to the PIR and should support the information needs listed in the ground tactical plan. Common sense is the best guide for selecting NAIs.

Normally, a priority is assigned to each NAI. In the example, NAIs 1 and 2 focus on the objective area; NAIs 3 through 5 focus on known OPFOR locations; and NAIs 6 through 18 focus on routes, possible OPFOR locations, and reinforcing routes. The two TAIs address possible enemy reinforcing routes from the east and the south.

The staff and the subordinate commanders have taken part in this effort since the S-4 needed someone to look at

two bridges, NAIs 11 and 12, so he could move the combat trains forward during the battle. The S-3 and the subordinate commanders needed information for both the assault and the supporting positions—NAIs 13, 14, and 18. This process of selecting NAIs does not have to be time consuming, but it does have to incorporate input from all the key personnel in the battalion.

Once the S-2 knows where to focus his reconnaissance effort, he can then match the tasks with the available units. There are several ways to do this, but the matrix shown here is one useful tool. With a good matrix, specific intelligence requirements are not overlooked and units are not overtasked. (One of the major shortcomings at the JRTC is overtasking scout platoons.)

A point to remember is that the S-2 does not task the units, that is the S-3's responsibility. This matrix or a similar one is easy to construct and adapt to a unit's mission needs.

The scouts have the most difficult task, and the S-2 believes it will take them most of one night to move undetected into the objective area and get the information that is needed. Further, given the size of the objective area and the need to build some redundancy into the reconnaissance plan, all three scout squads need to work that area. The infantry patrols work the friendly routes and the OPFOR's reinforcing routes. The S-2 plans to ask the brigade headquarters to focus its signal intelligence efforts on the objective to help determine both OPFOR activity in the area and the command and control means being used.

In coordination with the battalion staff, the S-2 completes the reconnaissance plan. Trade-offs will be made to support the battalion's overall tactical plan. But with this detailed approach to reconnaissance, the battalion is more likely to obtain the information it must have to support its attack.

A final point that is critical to the success of the mission and its security is the information that is provided to the scouts and the infantry patrols. Map 3 shows all the NAIs translated into checkpoints and planned indirect fire targets. Reconnaissance units work best with

| RECONNAISSANCE COLLECTION MATRIX | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|-------------|-------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--------|
| SIR ASSETS | MANEUVER ROUTES | | KNOWN OR SUSPECTED ENEMY | | OBJECTIVE AREA | | ENEMY RE- INFORCEMENT ROUTES | |
| | EAST | WEST | HILL 307 | HILL 275 | STRONG POINT | CROSS ROADS | EAST | SOUTH |
| SCOUT | | NAI 10 | | NAI 4 | | NAI 2 | | |
| 1ST SQD | | | | NAI 3 | | EAST | | |
| 2ND SQD | | NAI 14 | | | NAI 1 | | | |
| 3RD SQD | NAI 13&18 | | NAI 5 | | NAI 1 | NAI 2 | | |
| A CO | | NAI 8-9-11 | | | | | | |
| PATROL 1 | | | | | | | | |
| PATROL 2 | | | | | | | | |
| PATROL 3 | | | | | | | | |
| B CO | NAI 6-7-12 | | | | | | | |
| PATROL 1 | | | | | | | | |
| PATROL 2 | | | | | | | | |
| PATROL 3 | | | | | | | | |
| C CO | | | | | | | NAI 16&17 | |
| PATROL 1 | | | | | | | | |
| PATROL 2 | | | | | | | | NAI 15 |
| PATROL 3 | | | | | | | | |
| OTHER ASSETS | | | | | | | | |

detailed focal points, and they need to deploy with only the checkpoints and targets that are essential to their tasks on their overlays. For example: The Company B patrol will deploy with only

checkpoints 6, 7, and 12 on its overlay. If the overlay falls into the hands of the OPFOR, it will not compromise the entire mission. Further, these checkpoints can serve as link-up points between the

A good reconnaissance plan alone will not win a battle, but without detailed information on an objective, a battalion has little chance to mass its forces and achieve a surprise attack. One of the keys to improving the attack is to get everyone involved in reconnaissance planning before orders are issued.

A detailed approach to reconnaissance yields other advantages as well: The IPB is improved; the entire staff is involved, so they routinely know more about the battle area; and the chances for mission success are improved, because time well spent on reconnaissance is never time lost.

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Dragon Sustainment Training

Dragon gunners are trained either at the Infantry School or in unit-run training programs, but these programs will not produce high-quality Dragon gunners unless the gunners also receive sustainment training to maintain their skills.

Appendix A of the Dragon manual, TC 23-24, gives some guidance on setting up a sustainment program and recommends a four-hour monthly program for each gunner. This program consists mainly of Skill Level 1 Soldier's Manual tasks—

Prepare a Dragon for firing, for example, and Demonstrate firing positions. But this program does not include tracking, which is the most difficult skill for a gunner to master and the easiest for him to lose.

While four hours a month is enough time for training on the Soldier's Manual Dragon tasks, it is not enough when tracking is included. The training time, accordingly, should be extended to at least eight hours a month. And this train-

ing probably should be conducted at battalion level to standardize the training throughout the unit and make it easier to plan and support.

In addition to the usual classroom subjects mentioned, the first part of the 8-hour training session should consist of classes on the tactics and techniques that potential enemy armored vehicles use and on the strengths and weaknesses of those vehicles.

The Army has some really good audio-